



CITY OF ROCKVILLE  
CO-ED PICKLEBALL TRADITIONAL LEAGUE RULES

I. I. BASIC OVERVIEW

- A. The USA pickleball Association (USAPA) rulebook will be used to govern all pickleball play unless otherwise stated by the City of Rockville. Please visit the following websites for more rule clarification:  
<https://www.usapa.org/ifp-official-rules/>
- B. Pickle-ball® is played on a badminton-sized court: 20' x 44.' The ball is served diagonally (starting with the right-hand service-square), and points can only be scored by the side that serves.
- C. Players on each side must let the ball bounce once before volleys are allowed, and there is a seven-foot no-volley zone commonly referred to as “the kitchen” on each side of the net, to prevent “spiking.” The server continues to serve, alternating service courts, until he or she faults. The first side to score eleven points and leading by at least two points wins.
- D. Traditional League: Will play in doubles format and games will be played in a best of 3 format (first team to get two wins). Each team is allowed up to 3 paid players on a team.
- E. League Supervisor: Ms. Ayanis Dennis ([adennis@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:adennis@rockvillemd.gov)) Phone # (240) 314-8633

II. GAME PLAY

A. **THE SERVE**

- 1. At the beginning of the serve, one foot must be on the playing surface behind the baseline; neither of the server's feet may touch the court on or inside the baseline; neither of the server's feet may touch outside the imaginary extensions of the baseline.
- 2. In addition to the standard serve sequence, the ball must be struck without bouncing it. Players may opt to use an alternate “drop serve” method.
- 3. Contact with the ball must not be made above the waist.
- 4. The server's arm must be moving in an upward arc at the time the ball is struck and may be made with either a forehand or backhand motion
- 5. The server must serve to the correct service court (the court diagonally opposite the server). The serve may clear or touch the net and must clear the No Volley-Zone (NVZ) and the NVZ lines. The serve may land on any other service court line.
- 6. Only one serve attempt is allowed. Given the new USA Pickleball rule, “Let Serves” are now allowed. If a served ball touches the net, strap, or band of the pickleball net, and then lands in the correct service court. If any player stops play because of a service let being called, that player/team will have committed a fault.

## **B. THE SERVICE AND SIDE SELECTION**

1. At the start of the first game the team on the right side of the schedule will serve first. The team on the left side of the schedule will pick the side they choice to start on. After the first games the losing team will serve first.
2. Both players on the serving doubles team have the opportunity to serve and score points until they commit a fault \*(except for the first service sequence of each new game). Once a team commits a fault during the first game of play, the ball will go to the opposing team.
3. The first serve of each side-out is made from the right-hand court. If a point is scored, the server switches sides and the server initiate the next serve from the left-hand court
4. As subsequent points are scored, the server continues switching back and forth until a fault is committed, and the first server loses the serve. When the first server loses the serve the partner then serves from their correct side of the court (except for the first service sequence of the game\*).
5. The second server continues serving until his team commits a fault and loses the serve to the opposing team. Once the service goes to the opposition (at side out), the first serve is from the right-hand court and both players on that team have the opportunity to serve and score points until their team commits two faults.
6. It is recommended that the players change ends of the court when one side has 6 points to minimize the effects of the sun and wind.

## **C. SCORING**

1. Points are scored only by the serving team.
2. Each game will be played to 11 points (must win by two points).
3. Playoff games will be played to 11 (must win by two points).
4. The player who is serving should declare the score and serving position before each serve, starting with their team's score first, then their opposing team's score second and finally their serving position. This must be done before the ball is served.
5. If the server or referee calls the wrong score, any player may stop play before the return of serve to ask for correction.
6. After the serve has occurred, a player who stops and challenges the called score when there is no error will have committed a fault.
7. Games will be played in a best of 3 format (first team to get two wins).
8. After your games have been played, players record their scores on the score sheet and submit it to the Site Supervisor. Record the teams score and the total for all games played.

## **D. DOUBLE-BOUNCE RULES**

1. When the ball is served, the receiving team must let it bounce before returning, and then the serving team must let it bounce before returning, thus two bounces. After the ball has bounced once in each team's court, both teams may either volley the ball (hit the ball before it bounces) or play it off a bounce (ground stroke).

## **E. NON-VOLLEY ZONE “KITCHEN”**

1. The Non-Volley Zone (NVZ) also known as the “Kitchen” is the court area within 7 feet on both sides of the net. All lines bounding the NVZ are part of the NVZ. The NVZ is two-dimensional and does not rise above the playing surface.
2. Volleying is prohibited within the non-volley zone. This rule prevents players from executing smashes from a position within the zone.
3. It is a fault if, when volleying a ball, the player steps on the non-volley zone, including the line and/or when the player’s momentum causes them or anything they are wearing or carrying to touch the non-volley zone including the associated lines
4. The only time a player may step into kitchen or “non-volley” zone is when the balls bounce in this area. At that time a player may step into the kitchen to hit the ball and then must step back out of the kitchen immediately.

## **F. LINE CALLS**

1. Players are responsible for calling the lines on their end of the court. If a player makes an initial line call, and then asks for either the opponent(s) or the site supervisors’ opinion, if the opponent or site supervisor can make a clear “in” or “out” call, the clear call will stand. If no clear call can be made, the initial line call by the player will stand. A call made by the opponent can be appealed to the site supervisor for a final “in” or “out” decision.
2. A ball contacting any line, except the non-volley zone line on a serve, is considered “in”. A serve contacting the non-volley zone line is short and a fault.
3. A player should not question an opponent’s call, although any player may appeal a call to a Site Supervisor before the score is called to start the next point.
4. If one player calls the ball “out” and the partner calls it “in”, then doubt exists, and the team’s call will be “in”. Any player may appeal a call to the Site Supervisor. If the site supervisor did not see the ball, the ball is considered in.
5. “Out” line calls should be promptly signaled by voice and may include a hand signal regardless of how obvious they may seem.

## **G. FAULT RULES**

1. A fault is any action that stops play because of a rule violation.
2. A fault occurs when:
  - A serve does not land within the confines of the receiving court
  - The ball is hit into the net on the serve or any return
  - The ball is volleyed before a bounce has occurred on each side
  - The ball is hit out of bounds
  - A ball is volleyed from the non-volley zone
  - A ball bounces twice before being struck by the receiver
  - A player, player's clothing, or any part of a player's paddle touches the net or the net post when the ball is in play
  - There is a violation of a service rule
  - A ball in play strikes a player or anything the player is wearing or carrying
  - The player deliberately touches the ball with the paddle more than once
  - A ball in play strikes any permanent object before bouncing on the court
3. A fault by the serving team results in the server's loss of serve or side out.

## **H. TIME-OUT RULES**

1. Each team is allowed one 30 sec time-out per game.
2. There is no penalty for calling a time-out when none is available if all other time-out rules are complied with. Play will immediately resume.
3. Medical Time-Out: If a player is accidentally injured during a match, that player may take a medical timeout. Site Supervisor should be summoned to assess the situation and render appropriate first aid.
4. If blood is seen, play may not resume until the bleeding has been controlled and any blood on clothing and the court has been cleaned up.

## **III. Game Schedules**

### **A. FORFEITURES, ABSENCES, and "NO-SHOWS"**

1. Games will be played **only** on the scheduled dates unless there is inclement weather. Games that get rained-out will be rescheduled.

2. Please notify the League supervisor **Three** days before the scheduled match if the team cannot make the match or if the team is using a sub for the evening.
3. No games will be rescheduled due to a player or team absence. The team will need to find a sub to fill in for an absent teammate or forfeit if both players are unable to attend the match.
4. If a team is a “No-Show” which means they did not notify the League Supervisor that they are not able to attend their scheduled match in the appropriate time and or have not arrived by 10 minutes before the start of play this will be considered a forfeit.

**5. After 2 forfeits the team will be removed from the schedule.**

*\*If you can provide a medical excuse, then it will not count as a forfeit. If it is Covid related you will need to provide a negative test result before resuming game play.*

6. The suspensions listed below pertains to anyone leaving their matches prior to the completion of Ladder play and for behavioral issues. If a player must leave their match due to a medical issue, you will be excused from the suspensions.

- a) 1<sup>st</sup> offence: you will be suspended from league play for 2 weeks
- b) 2<sup>nd</sup> offence: you will be suspended from league play for 4 weeks
- c) 3<sup>rd</sup> offence: you will be suspended from league play for 12 months from the date of the last infraction

## **B. SUBSTITUTIONS**

**1. Each team is allowed 2 paid players and 1 registered paid substitute.**

- Unregistered subs who fill in for a player on occasion will need to submit their name and contact information to the League Supervisor ([adennis@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:adennis@rockvillemd.gov)).
  - Unregistered subs are unable to play in tournament play.
  - Only registered paid players are allowed to play in tournament play (this includes the teams’ registered paid sub).
2. That 3<sup>rd</sup> team member must be registered by the start of third week of games in order to play.
  3. Only two players are allowed to play during each match. Those same two players must play the entire match with no substitutions.
  4. No substitutions can be made during the match. If an injury occurs during a game and that injured player cannot continue, that team will have to forfeit that match.

## **IV. TOURNAMENT**

### **A. TOURNAMENT RULES AND REGULATIONS**

1. The tournament will take place right after the regular season.
2. The tournament will be played in a best of 3 games format (first team to get two wins).
3. The Championship/Finals will be played right after in best of 3 game format (first team to get two wins)
4. Positive proof of identification must be furnished and take place prior to the scheduled tournament game. A valid driver's license or other photo I.D. are the only accepted means of providing positive proof of identification.
5. The number of teams that advance to the post season tournament, will be dependent on the number of teams in the league.
6. Higher seed will serve first with the lower seed choosing the court side. Except for the championship match which the serve will be determined by a coin flip.

## V. OFFICIATING

1. The matches will be self-officiated
2. Each player will be asked to be honest in calling hits in or out. Any player may appeal a call to the site supervisor. If the site supervisor did not see the ball, the ball is considered in.
3. If a player is found to be intentionally cheating consistently, please notify the Site Supervisor and their team will be given a warning. If it continues, their team will forfeit the match they are in and the player may be asked to leave the league.
4. If a player uses objectionable or damaging language directed at another person, he or she will incur a warning for the first offense. If it happens again, a technical foul will be issued.
5. A warning shall not result in a loss of rally or point awarded. Once a warning has been issued, a second warning for any reason, given to the same player or team during the match, will result in a technical foul being issued to the team.
6. A warning or technical foul shall have no effect on server change or side out.
7. Actions or behavior that will result in a technical foul (without a warning being issued beforehand): Excessive arguing; purposely breaking the ball or striking the ball between rallies; a player using extremely objectionable or demeaning languages directed at another person; excessive questioning of the official or site supervisor; challenging the official; threats of any nature; and any other actions that are considered extreme unsportsmanlike behavior warranting a one-point award to the opposing side.
8. The official and site supervisor is empowered to call technical fouls. When a technical foul is called, one point shall be added to the score of the opposing side. After the point is awarded, the player or team awarded the point must move on their own to the correct position (s) that reflects their score.
9. If a second technical foul has been issued to the same team, that team will forfeit the match.

## VI. V. PLAYER CONDUCT

- A. A player or spectator who is ejected from the match by an official or City Staff Representative shall be suspended for at least one (1) additional match (next league match played by that team). The ejected person is not permitted on the court during their suspension. A second ejection

during the season shall be an automatic suspension; length of suspension will depend on severity of incident. Subject to one-year suspension from date of incident if deemed necessary. Team Managers should remind their players of this rule before the start of the season.

- B. Any player or spectator who approached an official, City staff in a negative manner before, during or after the conclusion of a league match shall be suspended for at least one (1) match and depending on severity of the incident, may incur a longer suspension period.
- C. Before, during or after a game, anyone who strikes, shoves, pushes, bumps or otherwise molests, harasses, or threatens anyone shall be suspended for at least 1 year from the date of the incident or longer if deemed necessary by the league. After the suspension is served, the individual can return to programs on a probationary period for a minimum of 1 year.
- D. Any unsportsmanlike conduct may result in barring the player(s) or the team from further participation in the league, depending on severity of incident.
- E. Any Team Manager/Player/Spectator that has been suspended shall not be permitted to attend the match nor be at the court/in the area while the suspension is being served.
- F. A player or substitute committing an unsportsmanlike act including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Disrespectfully addressing an official, City Staff gesturing in such a manner as to indicate resentment.
  - b. Using profanity or vulgarity; taunting, baiting or ridiculing another player or bench personnel; or pointing a finger at or making obscene gestures toward another player or bench personnel.
  - c. Inciting undesirable crowd reaction.
  - d. Contacting an opponent, while the ball is dead in an unnecessary, unacceptable and excessive manner.
  - e. Fighting
  - f. Disrespectfully contacting an official.

## VII. VII. AWARDS

Awards shall be as follows:

League Champion – 1 Pickleball Championship shirts for each player.

## VIII. VIII. GENERAL LEAGUE ADMINISTRATION

### A. FORFEITURES

- 1. Any team forfeiting two (2) League matches may be dropped from the League if evidence indicates that the team may not be able to field a team. All scheduled matches not played shall be forfeited to the opponents.

### B. REFUNDS

- 1. Team withdrawals from a program are strongly discouraged. All requests for refunds must be in writing and a \$15 administrative fee will be charged per person prior to the start of the season. Forfeiture of team fee will occur once league play has begun (this includes the entire day of the first league games.)

### C. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

- 1. In case of inclement weather on the day of the game, call for the recorded message on **240-314-5055**. All decisions are made by approximately 3pm on weekdays and approximately 10am on Sunday's.

### D. PARK/COURT RULES

No smoking or drinking (includes alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages) is allowed at all City of Rockville parks and courts. Players reported as violating this policy will be dropped from the League. Effective March 1, 2016, no smoking or vaping will be permitted on any City of Rockville property including City parks, centers and facilities in accordance with Montgomery Code Section 24-9 (Smoking in Public Places)

### E. SCORES

To check scores and standings online, please visit

[www.rockvillemd.gov/recreation/sports](http://www.rockvillemd.gov/recreation/sports)

**Adult Sports Division**  
**League Expectations, Policies/Disciplinary Measures**

**MISSION**

The City of Rockville's Adult Sports Division mission is to provide league and program opportunities for adults of all ages. Programs are designed to promote physical activity, economic development, improve health, and provide social outlet through participation at well maintained facilities.

**EXPECTATIONS**

The City of Rockville provides league rules that dictate how the program is operated and governed.

The City of Rockville requires players, coaches/team managers, and spectators to exhibit good conduct and sportsmanship before, during, and after games. Examples of good sportsmanship and conduct include but are not limited to:

- Fairness
- Ethics
- Respect
- Sense of fellowship
- Teamwork
- Positively encourage and congratulate all players and opponents as well as officials, city staff
- Understanding and promoting that this is a recreational league

**POLICIES/DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

*City of Rockville Sports Supervisors reserve the right to amend disciplinary measures below if investigation deems it necessary*

THE TERM "INDIVIDUAL" INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING: MANAGER, CAPTAIN, PLAYER, OR SPECTATOR. A TEAM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONDUCT OF ITS INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS AND SPECTATORS. MISCONDUCT MAY RESULT IN PENALIZING AN INDIVIDUAL OR TEAM FROM ALL CITY OF ROCKVILLE LEAGUES.

- Coach or Team Manager/Player/Spectator Ejection
  - If ejected from a league game, that individual will be suspended from the team's next played league match or for a period of time deemed fair by the league. A second ejection during the season shall be an automatic suspension; length of suspension will depend on severity of incident. Subject to one year suspension from date of incident if deemed necessary. Team manager/coach should remind their players of this rule before the start of the season.
- Ineligible Players
  - A coach/team manager who knowingly uses a suspended or ineligible player shall forfeit his/her coaching/team manager position and the team shall forfeit all games in which the player participated.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct:
  - If ejected from a league game, that individual will be suspended from the team's next played league match or for a period of time deemed fair by the league. A second ejection during the season shall be an automatic suspension; length of suspension will depend on severity of incident. Subject to one year suspension from date of incident if deemed necessary. Team manager/coach should remind their players of this rule before the start of the season.
    - Unsportsmanlike conduct includes, but is not limited to:
      - Disrespectfully addressing an official or City Staff
      - Using profanity
      - Attempting to influence an official's decision
      - Baiting an opponent or obstructing his vision by waving hands near his eyes
      - Disrespectfully addressing or baiting an opponent and/or own team



-Objecting to an official's decision by rising from the bench or using gestures or raising voice

-Inciting undesirable crowd reactions.

- Before, during or after a game, anyone who strikes, shoves, pushes, bumps or otherwise molests, harasses, or threatens anyone shall be suspended for at least 1 year from the date of the incident or longer if deemed necessary by the league. After the suspension is served, the individual can return to programs on a probationary period for a minimum of 1 year.